

Environmental Protection Agency

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of accrued interest, penalty or administrative costs, where he determines that—

(i) Waiver is justified under the criteria of § 13.25;

(ii) The debt or the charges resulted from the Agency's error, action or inaction, and without fault by the debtor; or

(iii) Collection of these charges would be against equity and good conscience or not in the best interest of the United States.

(2) A decision to waive interest, penalty charges or administrative costs may be made at any time prior to payment of a debt. However, where these charges have been collected prior to the waiver decision, they will not be refunded. The Administrator's decision to waive or not waive collection of these charges is a final agency action.

§ 13.12 Interest and charges pending waiver or review.

Interest, penalty charges and administrative costs will continue to accrue on a debt during administrative appeal, either formal or informal, and during waiver consideration by the Agency; *except*, that interest, penalty charges and administrative costs will not be assessed where a statute or a regulation specifically prohibits collection of the debt during the period of the administrative appeal or the Agency review.

§ 13.13 Contracting for collection services.

EPA will use private collection services where it determines that their use is in the best interest of the Government. Where EPA determines that there is a need to contract for collection services it will—

(a) Retain sole authority to resolve any dispute by the debtor of the validity of the debt, to compromise the debt, to suspend or terminate collection action, to refer the debt to DOJ for litigation, and to take any other action under this part which does not result in full collection of the debt;

(b) Require the contractor to comply with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, to the extent specified in 5 U.S.C. 552a(m), with applicable Federal and State laws pertaining to debt collection practices (e.g., the Fair Debt Col-

lection Practices Act (15 U.S.C. 1692 *et seq.*)), and with applicable regulations of the Internal Revenue Service;

(c) Require the contractor to account accurately and fully for all amounts collected; and

(d) Require the contractor to provide to EPA, upon request, all data and reports contained in its files relating to its collection actions on a debt.

§ 13.14 Use of credit reporting agencies.

EPA reports delinquent debts to appropriate credit reporting agencies.

(a) EPA provides the following information to the reporting agencies:

(1) A statement that the claim is valid and is overdue;

(2) The name, address, taxpayer identification number and any other information necessary to establish the identity of the debtor;

(3) The amount, status and history of the debt; and

(4) The program or pertinent activity under which the debt arose.

(b) Before disclosing debt information, EPA will:

(1) Take reasonable action to locate the debtor if a current address is not available; and

(2) If a current address is available, notify the debtor by certified mail, return receipt requested, that:

(i) The designated EPA official has reviewed the claim and has determined that it is valid and overdue;

(ii) That within 60 days EPA intends to disclose to a credit reporting agency the information authorized for disclosure by this subsection; and

(iii) The debtor can request a complete explanation of the claim, can dispute the information in EPA's records concerning the claim, and can file for an administrative review, waiver or reconsideration of the claim, where applicable.

(c) Before information is submitted to a credit reporting agency, EPA will provide a written statement to the reporting agency that all required actions have been taken. Additionally, EPA will, thereafter, ensure that the credit reporting agency is promptly informed of any substantive change in the conditions or amounts of the debt,

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and promptly verify or correct information relevant to the claim.

(d) If a debtor disputes the validity of the debt, the credit reporting agency will refer the matter to the appropriate EPA official. The credit reporting agency will exclude the debt from its reports until EPA certifies in writing that the debt is valid.

§ 13.15 Taxpayer information.

(a) The Administrator may obtain a debtor's current mailing address from the Internal Revenue Service.

(b) Addresses obtained from the Internal Revenue Service will be used by the Agency, its officers, employees, agents or contractors and other Federal agencies only to collect or dispose of debts, and may be disclosed to credit reporting agencies only for the purpose of their use in preparing a commercial credit report on the taxpayer for use by EPA.

§ 13.16 Liquidation of collateral.

Where the Administrator holds a security instrument with a power of sale or has physical possession of collateral, he may liquidate the security or collateral and apply the proceeds to the overdue debt. EPA will exercise this right where the debtor fails to pay within a reasonable time after demand, unless the cost of disposing of the collateral is disproportionate to its value or special circumstances require judicial foreclosure. However, collection from other businesses, including liquidation of security or collateral, is not a prerequisite to requiring payment by a surety or insurance company unless expressly required by contract or statute. The Administrator will give the debtor reasonable notice of the sale and an accounting of any surplus proceeds and will comply with any other requirements of law or contract.

§ 13.17 Suspension or revocation of license or eligibility.

When collecting statutory penalties, forfeitures, or debts for purposes of enforcement or compelling compliance, the Administrator may suspend or revoke licenses or other privileges for any inexcusable, prolonged or repeated failure of a debtor to pay a claim. Additionally, the Administrator may sus-

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pend or disqualify any contractor, lender, broker, borrower, grantee or other debtor from doing business with EPA or engaging in programs EPA sponsors or funds if a debtor fails to pay its debts to the Government within a reasonable time. Debtors will be notified before such action is taken and applicable suspension or debarment procedures will be used. The Administrator will report the failure of any surety to honor its obligations to the Treasury Department for action under 6 U.S.C. 11.

§ 13.18 Installment payments.

(a) Whenever, feasible, and except as otherwise provided by law, debts owed to the United States, together with interest, penalty and administrative costs, as required by § 13.11, will be collected in a single payment. However, where the Administrator determines that a debtor is financially unable to pay the indebtedness in a single payment or that an alternative payment mechanism is in the best interest of the United States, the Administrator may approve repayment of the debt in installments. The debtor has the burden of establishing that it is financially unable to pay the debt in a single payment or that an alternative payment mechanism is warranted. If the Administrator agrees to accept payment by installments, the Administrator may require a debtor to execute a written agreement which specifies all the terms of the repayment arrangement and which contains a provision accelerating the debt in the event of default. The size and frequency of installment payments will bear a reasonable relation to the size of the debt and the debtor's ability to pay. The installment payments will be sufficient in size and frequency to liquidate the debt in not more than 3 years, unless the Administrator determines that a longer period is required. Installment payments of less than \$50 per month generally will not be accepted, but may be accepted where the debtor's financial or other circumstances justify. If the debt is unsecured, the Administrator may require the debtor to execute a confess-judgment note with a tax carry-forward and a tax carry-back